

May 13, 2009

**GOV. MANCHIN SUSPENDS SALES AND USE TAX
ON FLOOD RELIEF AND BUILDING SUPPLY ITEMS
IN AFFECTED COUNTIES**

*Governor awaits federal declaration of disaster area
Coal companies helping to expedite cleanup efforts*

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Joe Manchin today issued an executive order that temporarily suspends the consumer sales and service tax and the use tax on purchase and use of certain building construction materials and supplies, mobile homes, house trailers, modular homes and similar units, as well as supplies for flood relief that would substantially improve efforts to restore and reconstruct flood-affected property in Boone, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Raleigh and Wyoming counties – all areas on the governor’s May 9 State of Emergency declaration.

The sales tax suspension is in effect until June 10, unless further extended.

“Any time there’s a disaster that affects entire communities and, in this case, entire counties, we need to look at all options to help them rebuild and get their lives back in order as quickly and easily as possible,” Manchin said. “We’re removing a financial burden on people already dealing with a devastating situation. By suspending sales tax on the items these southern West Virginians are using to clean up their homes and businesses, and by making it easier to get temporary housing, we are helping them on the road to recovery.”

Gov. Manchin yesterday sent a formal request for a federal disaster declaration to President Obama and expects to hear back as early as today. U.S. Sens. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, and Third Congressional District Rep. Nick J. Rahall have urged the president and FEMA to expedite the approval process.

The governor praised FEMA representatives who have been on the ground in the flood-affected counties since this past weekend, gathering the information necessary in order for the flooded communities to receive the federal declaration.

“Federal officials from local FEMA reps to Homeland Security Sec. Janet Napolitano have been very helpful and supportive of this effort and have pledged their help,” Manchin said. “There’s a necessary process in place to get the federal assistance here and they have assured me it will be expedited.” The governor also said that coal companies and local businesses and citizens have stepped up to the plate to reduce initial flood cleanup efforts from months to weeks.

“I want to thank all the coal companies and other businesses that have rapidly come forward with their heavy equipment and expertise to move debris and rock and have coordinated with the National Guard and our emergency management teams to tremendously speed up this process. We could not do this without them.”

The governor urges citizens to continue to contact their local county emergency services offices to report flood and storm damages to their homes and businesses.

Phone numbers for the county emergency operations centers:

Boone -- 304-369-7273

Logan -- 304-752-0917

McDowell -- 304-436-4106

Mingo -- 304-235-8551

Raleigh -- 304-255-9312

Wyoming -- 304-732-6953

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